

# ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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## MEMORANDUM

**To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD**

**From: Tourism & Culture Chair David Rosenwasser**

**Re: April & May, 2006 Meetings**

**Date: June 2, 2006**

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The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met April 20, 2006 at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA), and May 24, 2006 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC). Present for the April meeting were subcommittee members Rosenwasser, Casale, and Lacki, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein. Present for the May meeting were subcommittee members Rosenwasser, Casale, Lacki, and Lawson, as well as incoming NTCC President John Percy.

### Arts and Economic Prosperity Project:

Following approval by the full group at the March 31, 2006 general meeting, the subcommittee began its oversight of ENRP's participation in the Americans for the Arts "Arts and Economic Prosperity II" project in partnership with the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County and AmeriCorps.

The subcommittee invited additional interested parties to join the steering committee. Dr. Ruth Bereson of the University at Buffalo Arts Management Program, David Granville from the Arts Council Board of Directors and the City of Buffalo Department of Economic Development, Permits & Inspections, and Barbra Kavanaugh, former Buffalo Common Council Member and an arts as industry advocate have so far joined the group.

The database of over 175 arts organizations was compiled and introductory letters were sent to those groups asking them to participate in the project. On April 20 ENRP held a press conference to announce the project. In mid-May another letter was sent to the arts organizations, followed by an e-mail from Americans for the Arts with a link to the organizational survey; that process is now underway. In addition, we began the audience surveys at the Castellani Art Museum and MusicalFare Theatre. Surveying is being conducted by ENRP staff, AmeriCorps volunteers, and volunteers

from Niagara University and Daemen College. Volunteers are unpaid but do receive the opportunity to attend the performance at the surveyed site.

The subcommittee is also monitoring other, similar efforts in the region. Specifically, the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative has a board and has retained Charlene Ritter-Lester as a consultant to revive that project. They are being funded through the Oishei Foundation. The boards of the “big nine” cultural organizations have contracted with the University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth to perform an impact analysis for their organizations. Finally, the Binational Tourism Alliance recently sent out a survey of organizations.

We are looking for ways to unify our efforts – or at least keep everyone informed of each other’s work – but have limitations based on the need to adhere exactly to Americans for the Arts’ methodology and process. One area of opportunity is to share the raw data, which we will receive at the end of this year or early next year. At some point the subcommittee may reach out to these other efforts in a more formal manner, but no action is recommended at this time beyond current staff contact.

On the topic of methodology, some are questioning the multiplier that the economists will be using to calculate economic impact. The subcommittee would like to ask ENRP members Allen, Casale, and Nasoff to review this methodology and offer their perspective. Also, to ensure that we are surveying a proper cross-section in the audience portion of the project, the subcommittee asked ENRP Administrator Kniazuk to consult with a statistics department at one of our universities.

Our next set of audience surveys will be at festivals; Kenan Center American Craftsmen, Allentown Art, and Juneteenth are all tentatively scheduled for survey pending approval from those organizations.

#### Cultural Bus Wrap

The Arts Council and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority are working together to offer a deeply discounted rate for cultural organizations to advertise on bus wraps. There are nine buses, with room for a maximum of six organizations per bus. Some individual groups are purchasing a full bus, but the Arts Council is making sure that there are some available for smaller groups as well. Anyone interested should contact the Arts Council.

### Membership

Subcommittee Chair and NTCC President David Rosenwasser is leaving the region to take a similar position in St. Charles, Missouri (a suburb of St. Louis and a heritage tourism community). The subcommittee commended Rosenwasser on his vision and his commitment to ENRP and wished him well in his new position. Incoming NTCC President John Percy has agreed to join ENRP, and in fact used to work with us when he was on staff at the Niagara Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau. As to a chair for the subcommittee, **the Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Tourism & Culture Subcommittee recommends that ENRP Member David Lacki be appointed chair of the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee.**

### Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the Seneca golf course proposal and the concept of a dedicated source of funding for tourism and the arts.